UNITY IN FOREIGN MISSIONS

REPORT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE AND THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON CLOSER RELATIONS ON THE FOREIGN FIELD

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Presented at a Joint Session of the Executive Organs of the two Bodies, New York February 20, 1941

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INTRODUCTION

In 1939 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was overtured by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to consider and report on "the possibility of greater unity in the conduct of missions both at home and abroad." The matter was referred to the Council's Commission for the Study of Christian Unity, and upon its recommendation the Executive Committee voted to invite the Foreign Missions Conference to share in the appointment of a joint committee to explore and report on the subject as involving the foreign mission field. The Federal Council's action was phrased as follows:

As a fresh approach to the problem of fuller unity in foreign missions, *voted:* that the Federal Council commend to its member denominations earnest consideration of the findings with respect to "Coöperation and Unity" of the recent Madras Meeting and particularly the special declaration of representatives of the younger churches that coöperation is not enough; that the younger churches have frequently been held back in efforts to consummate union by lack of support from the mother churches; and that they now appeal with "all the fervor we possess to the missionary societies and boards and to the responsible authorities of the older churches, to support and encourage efforts to put an end to the scandalous effect of our divisions and to lead us in the path of union"; also to instruct the Commission to invite the Foreign Missions Conference to join it in making further studies with view to locating the possibilities of closer unity in the foreign field, identifying the bodies naturally related to them; and to request member denominations to bring the matter urgently to the attention of their foreign boards.

The Foreign Missions Conference accepted the Federal Council's invitation and the following representatives were named by the two bodies:

Foreign Missions Conference	*Federal Council of Churches*
J. W. Beardslee	Arlo A. Brown
H. W. Hobson	Douglas Horton
(James T. Addison, alternate)	
Kenneth S. Latourette	William B. Pugh
Henry P. Van Dusen	Abdel Ross Wentz
A. W. Wasson	H. Paul Douglass, *ex-officio*
A. L. Warnshuis, *ex-officio*	

The Joint Committee held its first meeting December 14, 1939, and organized by the election of President Arlo A. Brown of Drew University as chairman and Drs. Warnshuis and Douglass as joint secretaries. Subsequent meetings were held in the spring, summer and fall of 1940 and winter of 1941.

Particular aspects of the problem of unity in foreign missions were referred to subcommittees which made tentative reports and gathered much material, which was organized by the secretaries. A partial preliminary report was rendered to the two appointing bodies at their meetings in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in December, 1940. This final report records the agreements which the Committee has reached, and formulates recommendations on the more important topics studied. It is submitted for such action as the appointing bodies may see fit to take.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

Three Cycles of Historical Studies

For its interest in the contemporary possibilities of closer unity, the Committee has derived a strong sanction from long-continued trends in the life of the Church. The sense of continuity and of direction in its investigation has been particularly strengthened by means of three cycles of historical studies.

The widest of these cycles, surveyed in an introductory paper by Dr. Kenneth S. Latourette, traced the modern movement for Christian unity chiefly to the Evangelical movement in Protestantism during the last three centuries. This created a new type of common experience in the churches and eventually led in the nineteenth century to the formation of organizations unifying Christians of more than one ecclesiastical fellowship in such efforts as societies for the circulation of the Scriptures, Sunday School, anti-slavery, peace, and missionary societies.

The last 150 years was more intensively studied as the period of modern missions in their more distinctive forms. This period has seen the parallel progress of unity in the twin aspects of coöperation and church union, from a marginal to a central place in missionary enterprise. This progress has been especially rapid during the last fifty years. A section of the preliminary report, entitled "Christian Unity and the Younger Churches," exhibits this progress within the framework furnished by the great missionary world conferences in London, 1888; Carnegie Hall, New York, 1900; Edinburgh, 1910; Jerusalem, 1928; and Madras, 1938. (Published in abbreviated form in the Summer number of *Christendom*, 1940, pp. 412 ff.)

The final cycle of the Committee's historical studies was limited to the years since the Oxford, Edinburgh and Madras Conferences. It surveyed recent unity movements throughout the whole Church and set developments on the foreign field alongside of those in the older Christian lands. (This section of the preliminary report of the Committee appeared in condensed form in the Federal Council's *Information Service*, September 14, 1940, under the title "Current Progress in Church Coöperation and Union: Factual Surveys.")

Current Trends in Unity Movements

No formal summary of the many and varied cases presented in the foregoing survey can be here attempted; but certain trends will be briefly noted.

Types of unity aimed at. From this viewpoint most of the recent cases fall into two categories: (1) coöperative organization on the pattern of national Federations of Churches and Christian Councils and (2) corporate unions. The latter type of effort is the more frequent. Cases of attempted organic union are widely distributed throughout the world, with relatively more in the United States partially, at least, on account of the great variety of denominations needing to be unified.

Of *National Christian Councils*, those of the River Plate in South America, the Netherlands Indies, and of Tanganyika in East Africa are the only new ones actually to come into existence within the three years; while the Philippine Federation seems most conspicuous for the adoption of a novel and promising policy. Plans for the organization of new Councils are under consideration in several countries and in the West Indies.

Of *corporate unions*, six have been completely effected. Of these the French Reformed, the American and Chinese Methodist, and the Evangelical and Reformed in the United States are the most important ones. Seven are in stages of negotiation, with consummation apparently certain in some cases and dubious in others; while eight are classified as still within the stage of conversations — besides which there are one or two whose status is so nebulous as to be unclassifiable.

Federal union somewhat frequently is advocated as an alternative to or as a first step toward proposals for organic union — as is the case with considerable sentiment in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in North India and South Africa. There are still more numerous cases, however, of what are virtually loose Confederations — a term which would seem to describe a considerable group of movements uniting embryonic churches in central Africa. Mutual recognition of churches and the regularity and validity of their ministries is directly involved in the relations of the Orthodox Churches in the Balkan countries and elsewhere, and in deputations of the Anglican Church to several Orthodox Churches. There is considerable opinion in the Protestant Episcopal Church that this is

the central issue in negotiations with the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

All told, very marked activity toward coöperative organization or ecclesiastical union in various forms has been under way since 1937, but the time under consideration is too short to make possible their strict comparison or evaluation.

Motivation. When one comes to consider motivation, a great tangle of influences is obviously at work. The major and immediate impetus toward unity largely derives from circumstances. The *pragmatic* motive is the obvious one. This is at the fore in cases of union under totalitarian state pressure, as in Germany and Japan; in integrative movements due to racial feeling; for example, the proposed all-native South African church; in the search of minority churches in central Europe for strength through unity, as well as in numerous other cases where it is clearly a contributory factor.

Other unions, especially on the foreign mission field, are due to the circumstance that related churches in the Western hemisphere have united — for example, the Chinese Methodist union.

The *revulsion from division and competition* in local communities, and the demand for the union of Christian neighbors, are large influences which combine pragmatic and emotional factors. These appear in the Australian case and Presbyterian-Protestant Episcopal negotiations in the United States, as well as in connection with aspiration for a united church in West China. Doubtless closer analysis would find this undertone present almost everywhere. The union of related bodies is similarly motivated by the desire to heal unhappy breaches, the historic reasons for which have been outlived. American Methodism and Lutheranism have both illustrated this motive.

All these motives merge with those derived from the *pervasive ecumenical feeling* diffused through the world as the result of the recent group of ecumenical conferences and the provisional organization of the World Council — carried also, one may believe, on the winds of the Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth."

In general, these ecumenically motivated unions formulate their problems in terms developed on official Faith and Order lines. The most numerous reflect the general features of the South India Scheme; or else deal primarily with the regularization of existing ministries, as in the Australian and the Presbyterian-Protestant Episcopal cases in the United States already referred to.

More *unregimented idealistic stimuli* which have not yet fallen into

definite grooves reflect reverberations — especially from the Madras and Amsterdam Youth Conferences — in many parts of the world. These show the difference between the responses of laymen, of Christian youth and of the younger churches to the common spirit and those of ecclesiastical bodies and their representatives.

War Tasks are serving further to unite churches in several countries, recent action of the India National Christian Council being a good example. But this is not as conspicuously the case as might be expected. So far the united response to the war situation has chiefly come within denominational families — for example the Lutheran — or through ecumenical agencies working on a world-wide scale such as the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches. More local manifestations may have to come later.

In the longest view of the case, the Church of Christ is seen in this evidence as not unresponsive to divine leadership exercised either through outer circumstance or through the inner Spirit. How adequate the response may be only the longer reaches of time may tell.

Summary of Historical Studies

As limited to foreign mission fields the broad outcome of our total historical studies may be summarized as follows: In virtually every respect, the advance toward Christian coöperation and unity has proceeded both faster and farther among the younger Christian churches than among the parent churches of the West. This is true of both coöperation and organic unity; it is true with respect to both churches of the same family and churches springing from contrasted family types. It is true in both the secular activities of the churches (medicine, education, etc.) and in worship and evangelism. It is true both of declared intention and of actual realization. The most resolute determination to effect church unity and the most important proposals to that end arise from the younger churches. The most extensive and significant concrete experience in the various forms of coördination and unification are to be found among the younger churches.

Coöperation. Consider, first, the matter of coöperation. Very widely throughout the territory of the younger churches, medical resources have been unified. In Korea, the only medical college under Christian direction was launched by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.; it is now jointly sponsored by five missions representing three nations.

The other most important Christian medical center in Korea was founded by American Methodists but is now sponsored by Presbyterians and Methodists jointly. Union hospitals are maintained in a number of places in different countries. In South Fukien, China, all the medical missionary work of three missions, one American and two British, is administered as a unity by one board of direction. Medical education in union institutions is exemplified in Vellore, South India, and in Cheeloo University and in West China Union University (both now in Chengtu).

In the field of higher education, coördination and combination are increasingly the order of the day. Here, likewise, developments in China are both representative and prophetic. In the matter of administration and support from America, virtually all of the colleges except those under Lutheran or Episcopal auspices are linked in the Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China. Of the twelve member-institutions, all but two represent the coöperation of several American churches. In one of them no less than ten mission boards unite. Doubtless such extensive consolidations have been encouraged by exacting standards in the secular universities by which Christian colleges are judged, and also by financial stringency. But precisely the same factors press hard upon the church colleges in America, with what different result!

Prevailingly, the most vigorous and respected theological seminaries are union institutions. There are exceptions, but they serve to underscore the rule. The judgment of the World Church as to the necessity of coördinated theological training was understated rather than overstated in the Madras Meeting finding:

> For many of the problems of theological education the corporate unity of the Church is the only solution. . . . It is our firm conviction that in almost every case theological training should not be attempted except on a coöperative basis, with a number of churches participating.

In thirteen countries or areas of the younger churches, National Christian Councils are found. Generally speaking, they join more numerous and more varied denominational bodies, enjoy a larger confidence and support and are furnishing the churches a wider and more effective service than corresponding Councils in the lands of the older churches. Where missions or churches of the Anglican Communion are at work within these territories, they often play an active rôle in such Councils, while it is only within the past year that the

Church of England has taken its place within an actively functioning interdenominational Council and only within the past few months that the Protestant Episcopal Church has accepted membership in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. (See Fahs and Davis, *Conspectus of Coöperative Missionary Enterprises*, International Missionary Council, 1935.)

Organic Union. Consider, again, steps toward or actual realizations of organic union between churches. In the decade from 1927 to 1936, of the twenty-three significant negotiations looking toward possible unification, thirteen occurred between two or more younger churches. In this period, of the ten unions fully consummated, six concerned younger churches. In the three troublous years since the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences, of the thirty-seven developments in greater coöperation or union, seventeen are reported by younger churches. In this triennium one of the four newly realized unifications took place in China. These achievements, both of approach and of consummation, are all out of proportion to the relative number of younger and older church bodies.

In six areas where missions have planted Christian churches — in China, in North India, in South India, in Siam, in the Philippines and in Puerto Rico, unifications of churches which in the parent lands are still separate, have been sufficiently extensive to warrant the title "United Church." In China, units from eight denominations are joined in the Church of Christ in China, embracing a third of all Christians in the land. Both South India and North India United Churches include Presbyterians and Congregationalists. In Siam, Christians of Presbyterian and Baptist heritage are united in an autonomous church. In the Philippine Islands, the United Evangelical Church is formed of the union of Presbyterian, Congregational and United Brethren Missions. In Puerto Rico the Congregational Christian and United Brethren Churches have joined forces.

Not alone in unions achieved are the younger churches in the vanguard, but also in unions projected. The South India Scheme, involving the full organic union of Anglican, Methodist and South India United (Presbyterian and Congregational) Churches, has been rightly described as "the most important concrete proposal for union now before the churches of the world." If consummated, it would furnish precedents for the solution of every considerable obstacle to Christian unity among all of the communions of Protestantism. (We return to this proposal in Section V.)

II. MADRAS FINDINGS ON COÖPERATION AND UNITY

Not only in achievement and prospect but also in aspiration and determination the younger churches lead the older ones. The more immediate point of departure for the Committee's studies was supplied by the epochal findings on coöperation and unity of the Madras Meeting of the International Missionary Council. Their recency, representativeness and urgency make them easily the most challenging single statement on the subject as relates to the younger churches, while their language is already almost classic.

The Voice of the Younger Churches

The Report of the Edinburgh World Conference on Faith and Order asserted the duty of the mission boards of the West to respect union movements among the younger churches which "must be free to follow the leading of the Spirit of God." The Madras findings of 1938 on coöperation and unity definitely connect with this judgment.

The formal Madras *Findings* on unity specifically declared that Christian solidarity demands more than a coöperative expression; that coöperation breaks down in the ultimate stage owing to divided loyalty, and that there "has come in many fields a deep and growing conviction that the Spirit of God is guiding the various branches of his Church to seek for the realization of a visible and organic union" (p. 130).

Even this warmly-worded resolution was not strong enough for the representatives of the younger churches, who requested the insertion of a statement of their own, reading in part as follows:

The representatives of the younger churches in this Section one and all gave expression to the passionate longing that exists in all countries for visible union of the churches. They are aware of the fact of spiritual unity; they record with great thankfulness all the signs of coöperation and understanding that are increasingly seen in various directions; but they realize that this is not enough. Visible and organic union must be our goal. This, however, will require an honest study of those things in which the churches have differences, a widespread teaching of the common church membership in things that make for union and venturesome sacrifice on the part of all. Such a union alone will remove the evils arising out of our divisions. Union proposals have been put forward in different parts of the

world. Loyalty, however, will forbid the younger churches going forward to consummate any union unless it receives the wholehearted support and blessing of those through whom these churches have been planted. We are thus often torn between loyalty to our mother churches and loyalty to our ideal of union. We, therefore, appeal with all the fervor we possess, to the missionary societies and boards and the responsible authorities of the older churches, to take this matter seriously to heart, to labor with the churches in the mission field to achieve this union, to support and encourage us in all our efforts to put an end to the scandalous effects of our divisions, and to lead us in the path of union — the union for which our Lord prayed, through which the world would indeed believe in the Divine Mission of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Findings and Recommendations*, International Missionary Council, 1938, pp. 130–131.)

The final Madras recommendations on Coöperation and Unity concluded with crucial recommendations as follows:

That National Christian Councils be urged to initiate coöperative planning for the whole Christian enterprise in their respective fields, and that mission boards and churches on the field should consult with National Christian Councils in such matters; that in view of the evident leading of God and the supreme urgency of the call for organic union on the part of the younger churches, the older churches take this to heart with the utmost seriousness in the fields of prayer, thought and action. (*Ibid.*, p. 131.)

In accordance with this resolution the Committee has attempted "seriously to take to heart" on behalf of the American churches, these moving expressions of the younger churches.

Implementing the Madras Findings

The Committee's central endeavor has been to discover what is necessary, in a realistic and practical sense, to implement the Madras findings; what specifically is holding back their realization; and how the situation on the foreign field as respects coöperation and union, reacts upon the relations of the American churches.

A Specific Suggestion for Implementing the Madras Findings. The Committee satisfied itself by conference and correspondence with participants in the Madras Meeting, both missionaries and nationals, that its statement still represents the mind of the younger churches. The Committee, therefore, concluded that, in spite of obvious differences of ecclesiastical polity involved and of external circumstances, the American churches should consider the possibility of

some form of uniform action in response to the appeal of the younger churches. It deputized one of its members to draft a "normative resolution" which might serve as a general formula for the development of relations between the older and younger churches as involved in the problem of union. This resolution in the following form was presented with the preliminary report to the appointing bodies and approved by their meetings in Atlantic City in December, 1940.

Voted: To recommend to the constituent churches that each of them adopt the following resolution in response to the Madras resolutions of the younger churches on Coöperation and Unity:

The (insert name of church or organization) has received with heartfelt sympathy and gratitude the statement of the representatives of the younger Christian churches at the Madras Conference, declaring their passionate longing for visible union of the churches and their resolution to achieve greater unity. With profound conviction and sincerity, we respond to their purposes and desires.

We share a common shame in the unhappy effects of our divisions, and a common loyalty to the ideal of the unity of Christ's Church.

We are chagrined that the younger churches should ever be torn between loyalty to their mother churches and loyalty to their ideal of union. It is a matter of gravest regret if our divisions or any control or influence we may, wittingly or unwittingly, exercise upon the younger churches should impede them in advance toward their goal.

To the younger churches in their every effort toward greater unity, we pledge our sympathetic support. We shall seek to sustain them in their hopes and plans, and to welcome any specific proposals which they may care to offer, and to make certain that there shall be no falling off in assistance on this account from the sister churches of the West.

We give thanks to God for the achievements already realized in unity and coöperation among the younger churches. We pray that He will continue to grant them the strength and encouragement of His Holy Spirit that, under His guidance, they may continue "to lead us in the path of union — the union for which our Lord prayed, through which the world would indeed believe in the Divine Mission of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The Committee hopes that this resolution provides enough flexibility to permit its adoption by numerous churches, so that something like a common response might be given to the younger churches throughout the world.

Other Points of Anxiety

The Committee notes the repeated raising of questions on the part of the younger churches as to continued ecclesiastical fellowship and practical aid from the parent churches in case the younger churches unite in autonomous bodies in their respective lands. The Committee, therefore, would like to point out the existence of numerous precedents, such as that of the United Church of Canada, which remains in formal relations with the world organizations of all three of its parent bodies; also the declaratory action of the Lambeth Bishops that should the Anglican Church in India become part of a United Church, it might remain in communion with the Anglican churches throughout the world although no longer part of the ecclesiastical organization of these churches. (*The Lambeth Conference, 1930*, The Macmillan Company, pp. 124–5.)

The Committee also points out frequent expressions of anxiety with respect to continued financial assistance and would support the reasonable demand of the younger churches for specific agreements on the part of the older churches covering this crucial point.

Prospect of Union in Particular Areas

The heart of the Madras resolution of the younger churches is its declaration that coöperation is not enough and that "visible and organic union must be our goal." But churches equally sincere in this belief and aspiration are by no means equally ready for its early achievement, even when it is made clear that such union does not mean uniformity.

The Committee is obviously not competent to advise as to which are ready and which are not. On the ground, however, of such studies as it has been able to make it is prepared to record its judgment that, in addition to South India (which is discussed at length in Section V), the following fields offer unusually important possibilities of early union and that the churches concerned should be encouraged to explore them to the full: West China, Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico. The Committee also recognizes that current developments of unity in Japan, forced upon the older churches and complicated for the Japanese churches by nationalistic feeling and government pressure, call for prompt united action. Special statements on Japan, China and the Philippines are appended to the report (p. 36 ff.).

III. ECCLESIASTICAL THEORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACT AS BEARING ON UNITY AMONG THE YOUNGER CHURCHES

NEITHER unity nor organic union necessarily means uniformity, as the practice of scores of churches and the examination of virtually all large-scale plans of union make abundantly clear. Certainly no one hopes that union on the foreign field will make groups entirely like one another, doing away with varying practices or administrative forms and units. As relates to the present situation on the foreign field, there is no one "best way" of administering a united church, and no single pattern will be recommended.

Unreality of Formal Union Due to Administrative Restraints

The Committee, however, does find a pervasive obstacle to the realization of unity, even where it has been formally established, in the discrepancy between ecclesiastical theory and administrative fact. A united younger church has been set up. It is administered sectionally by representatives of the far from united missions of supporting denominations using hold-over methods. The union church has been brought into nominal existence; administrative control practically remains in the hands of missions constituted by and amenable to the older churches. This reflects both the greater experience and the spiritual ascendancy of the foreign mission group, as well as their large measure of financial control.

The United Church of South India furnishes a case in point. It is a very loose organization, the General Assembly of which has little or no executive power. This may be wholesome; but even the executive bodies of the smaller units of the church have not succeeded in welding their constituent parts into a thoroughly conscious unity. Former mission boundaries have produced organizations which control administratively almost all the Christian activities within the geographical boundaries of the Councils. This is caused partly by the fact that financial control has not been surrendered by mission-founded organizations, partly by the fact that there is little movement of individuals from one group to another. Catechists, pastors, teachers, rarely leave a mission district to work in another, even now that all are united within the one church. Again, mission leaders prove to be afflicted with extreme localism. Often they cannot agree on

policies, and each group prefers to pursue its own policy in its own district.

An interesting illustration of this tendency on a small scale has just occurred in the Madras Church Council. Nearly all administrative activities within the boundaries of the Council have for some years been controlled by the separate missions involved, but there was a so-called Board of Administration created in 1925, which it was hoped would assume the direction of all matters related specifically to the churches and their evangelistic outreach, including also the supervision of village schools, which are closely related to evangelistic work in South India. The attempt to enlist the full coöperation of all the missions involved failed at the outset and this body has been limping along, dealing largely with disciplinary matters and including the work of only one mission and part of another. In 1938 proposals were made by one of the coöperating missions looking to increased emphasis upon the Church Council as the parent body and the discussions precipitated the discontinuance of the Board of Administration, the other mission involved not only questioning the innovations and the method of their presentation but expressing also a decidedly adverse judgment upon the unrealistic type of coöperation which had characterized the operations of this body. The responsibilities of the old Board of Administration now devolve upon committees representing the old mission areas. In this case, then, unity did not unify. After having tried administrative unity on at least a small scale, the different parties have judged it safer to live apart. This may not be a bad decision, but it does serve to make questionable the expectation that union will automatically increase the desire to work together. At least in this case coöperation in the management of village churches was given a long trial, and finally completely discarded.

In this connection careful consideration should also be given to the provision in the Proposed Scheme of Church Union in South India. On page 87 of the 1935 edition it is proposed that the administrative units of the united church should continue at first to conform to present mission areas rather than to the new diocesan areas. Now, it may be that a sudden alteration of the present units of administration would cause confusion, but real unity cannot be secured until the various aspects of church work and administration are coördinated, and every effort should be made, even at the beginning of a union enterprise, so to harmonize all aspects of church work that it is

clearly seen and felt that the real units are those of the native church, not those of outside mission ventures.

Pros and Cons of Transfer of Control to the Younger Churches

It is not necessary to detail the frequently significant objections to the transfer of administrative responsibility, even to a united church. In the first place the strength and degree of development of the younger churches vary enormously from continent to continent and country to country. The considerations which follow obviously do not apply to the more aboriginal peoples in many parts of the world.

With respect to the younger churches among more highly developed peoples, some of the following appear relevant. It is alleged, for example, that both the experience and the genius of the Orient are against administrative efficiency in the Western sense. Oriental life has for centuries offered little occasion for the administration of large units. It is also to be remembered that no Oriental religion contains any elaborate social organization at all similar to the Christian church. The very idea of such organized religion, requiring administration, is foreign to the Oriental mind, to which religion is almost wholly an individual matter. Skill in this direction can only be acquired by these nationals through prolonged experience.

Again, it is argued that, even when ecclesiastical interests are transferred to a younger church, educational and medical interests should largely remain in Western hands because they involve special techniques. Now this is a strange argument in the mouth of those who maintain the older type of missionary organization in which, frequently, every commissioned person, whatever his ability or task, has a say on questions relating to every type of work. Indeed, one of the chief sins of the traditional mission is that it has failed to assign technical matters to technical hands. It is consequently in need of reorganization in any case, and may as well work out new and radical arrangements, transferring major responsibility to the younger church under provisions assuring that technical responsibilities be put into proper hands.

It is always a delicate matter to determine when and to what degree to transfer technical responsibility. As to general tendency, however, the Committee desires to go on record as recommending that it be done as widely and as rapidly as possible, even at the risk of the loss of immediate efficiency. Perhaps an indigenous type of

administration with other virtues than those of the Occident may be worked out along with an indigenous version of the terms of outward unity. This judgment is encouraged by not a few illustrations of satisfactory assumption of administrative responsibility by the younger churches. The work does not become demoralized and contributions do not fall off.

A fine illustration is found in the Church of Christ in South Fukien. Union of various groups had long been consummated there, but administration remained in the control of various denominational, missionary groups. A few years ago the actual management of Christian affairs in the district was put in the hands of the church body, a union organization. This has worked admirably. It has cemented the whole district into a conscious unity. The missionaries of three missions are engaged in church work under the direction of the church organization, which has gone so far as to send a missionary from one mission to work in an area evangelized and previously administered by another mission group, although the two groups — now associated in one church — originated in different countries and different denominations.

Abundant illustrations of the same tendency could be drawn from almost any major missionary area.

The Choice of Proper Administrative Units

In urging the principles advocated above, the Committee does not mean that the area of administration should necessarily be that of the total ecclesiastical unit. The thinly scattered and widely separated elements of a united Christian church covering a subcontinental area like India or China cannot economically receive intensive administration from a single headquarters. In such cases the question must be sharply raised: "Are not national churches too large for effective administration?" In China the cost of managing the large national unit, the Church of Christ in China, is so excessive that it proved to be an impossible burden on the church. So almost all administrative functions have been very wisely transferred to provincial Synods. These Synods, not the General Assembly of the Church, have the real power. In this same connection it seems very wise that negotiations for union in North and South India are entirely separate. A church of all India would at the present time be an unwieldy body, and it would be quite unthinkable that such a body could

effectively manage country-wide administrative functions. Moreover, would not the cost be materially lessened by regional union, or at least by a regional organization in which authority and administration were vested in smaller geographical units? Of course the area of administration must not be too small. Only experience can determine the optimum size.

It should be remembered also that the respective powers of national and regional synods vary greatly as between different denominations. The Methodist Church in America has recently decentralized to the extent of assigning major authority (including the election and control of bishops) to six regional "jurisdictional" conferences. Presbyterian union in the United States is also being considered on the basis of semi-autonomous regional synods under a common General Assembly. No theoretical issue would arise if a similar decentralization were applied to some of the younger churches and made the basis of administrative relationships.

Inherent Connection Between Unity and Autonomy

Representatives of the younger churches continually link the problems of unity and autonomy, and the Committee would underline the fact of discrepancy between the theory of an autonomous church, and the fact of continued administration by denominational missions, as one of the outstanding issues which the younger churches have in mind when they plead for aid in the accomplishment of their aspirations for unity.

Numerous difficulties which will undoubtedly arise in this connection either belong to a transitional stage which will pass, or, if they do not, it is the foreign mission tradition which will have to yield rather than the desire and will of the younger churches. This judgment is particularly pertinent in view of the great and growing sensitiveness of many younger churches with respect to foreign control; a tendency which is not infrequently registered in political action.

In view of the fact that the autonomy of united churches has not always been adequately recognized by American mission boards in their administrative dealings with these churches, *it is recommended* that the boards in the United States be requested to lay upon their representatives on the foreign field the duties (1) of transferring responsibility more rapidly to the younger churches; (2) of providing

methods of genuinely united administration of missionary aid given united churches, within compassable areas; (3) of directing further efforts to the unification of the administration of all missionary work in certain geographical areas, provinces, parts of provinces or even cities, with the expectation that such practical experience in easily compassable areas may lead in due time to united administration on a larger scale; also (4) to call upon the younger churches to show courage in assuming administrative responsibility corresponding to their independent ecclesiastical status.

IV. CLOSER RELATIONS OF FOREIGN MISSION AGENCIES IN AMERICA

PREVIOUS sections of this report have shown that Christian unity has gone far in the foreign mission field, both in the forms of joint planning and joint administration of union enterprises, and of ecclesiastical union. The general approval of this development by the churches' constituency throughout Christendom is undoubted, and there is a wide expectation that the process will be carried still further. This expectation, however, does not clearly differentiate between union on the field and closer relations of mission boards at home.

Challenged with the need of going further in unity, representatives on the field often retort, "We have gone about as far as we can until you get closer together at home." Evidence offered in the last section would seem to justify the judgment that union on the field frequently remains in large measure nominal without far-reaching concomitant changes requiring decisive action at the home base. (See also Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Commission on Appraisal, *Rethinking Missions*, Chapter XIV.)

What then is necessary to bring home base relationships into line with the general development of coöperation and union in foreign missions and what should be the next steps in this connection?

Degree of Existing Coöperative Unity

As matters now stand, the American boards of foreign missions have an effective joint planning agency in the Foreign Missions Conference. The Conference, however, does not profess to be an administrative organ. Radical suggestions have sometimes been made, calling for the merger of coöperating boards into a single board conducting the total work on the foreign field as a unit and wholly divorced from separate denominational objectives. Such a scheme logically implies greater unity on the part of the American churches than actually exists, and its premature advocacy has only served to bring about reaction.

Yet there are many precedents for arrangements that go beyond the present joint planning agency and still fall short of the complete merger of the separate boards. Many joint administrative procedures are possible and would be realistic in the light of actual relationships

and attitudes of the American denominations toward one another and the progress of united work at home in the partially parallel fields of home missions and Christian education, and through the Federal Council of Churches. The beginnings of joint administrative action at certain points are already in effect and the pressure of the present unparalleled emergency in foreign missions furnishes a strong reason for carrying the process further.

Precedents and Experiments

Precedents. Precedents from other countries more or less applicable to America, and proposals showing that the issue of home base relations is recognized elsewhere, may be cited as follows: The missionary societies in Holland have long practiced the pooling of their administrative staffs. While maintaining the separate organization of the societies, eight of them have entrusted all the administration both of the promotion of interest at the home base and of the direction of the work abroad, together with all financial business, to a united staff of secretaries. The secretarial work is departmentalized and each secretary in his departmental capacity serves all the societies. The result has been increased efficiency with reduced administrative expenses.

In the Netherlands Indies the crisis of withdrawal of support by the home boards incident to the World War has compelled mission forces to transfer administration to these islands. Under these circumstances, eighteen missions belonging to twelve societies have completely merged the administration of finances and staff under a central board with headquarters in Batavia. After several months, in which only emergency action could be taken while the reorganization of work and funds was developing, a combined budget for the year 1941 for these eighteen missions has been adopted, which is a most interesting example of the use of available resources for the maintenance of the total program of missionary work in the archipelago.

In Great Britain, the India Committee of the Conference of Missionary Societies has forwarded to India certain proposals advocating the united organization of missionary work especially in relation to united churches.

Beginnings of Joint Action by Boards in the United States. In the area of higher education, the boards have gone far in common action in dealing with groups of higher institutions on missionary fields through

College Boards, for China, etc. This definitely administrative unification is now so generally accepted as to appear only normal. The Philippine Committee, representing both the boards and the churches of the Islands, and acting as an area committee for the Foreign Missions Conference, has recently adopted novel proposals calling for sending, on a union basis, of missionaries for specialized tasks and for providing funds interdenominationally for special, non-recurring projects. Under these proposals coöperating boards at the home base would deliberately send out joint representatives for specific phases of united work instead of merely allowing their representatives to participate in united work as it develops on the mission field. The missionaries thus sent out on a union basis would be commissioned and immediately paid by their respective boards, but the planning would be a united planning according to which the total financing would be distributed. This example may be immediately applicable to other countries.

In the present crisis in the Orient, the East Asia Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference has practically been making administrative decisions in behalf of all the boards and communicating with them through denominational secretaries, acting as though they were joint agents. The Conference is carrying on increasing administrative responsibility for "orphaned missions" including the receiving and transmitting of funds for their support.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee's general conclusion is that unity among foreign mission boards at the home base has not gone as far as unity on the field, and that boards should make specific advances in order to fill the gap. The Committee would recommend:

(1) That attention be given to the further experimental expansion of united administrative responsibility;

(2) That consideration be given to measures corresponding to the transfer of responsibility of missions to churches and the unification of administration abroad, so that in general there may be unified agencies in the West dealing directly with united churches and united administrative organizations in other lands;

(3) That the foreign mission movement should evidence pioneering adventuresomeness and leadership in ecumenicity at the home base as it has through a long history on the foreign field.

It does not expect unity in the foreign field too greatly to outstrip the general progress of the ecumenical movement. The movement faces many challenges and may suffer a setback from the present disintegration of society. All the more need, then, is there that the foreign missionary movement help to hold the lines and indeed to point the way. The need for a complete re-education of the supporting constituencies of all the denominations is recognized, so that they may transfer their loyalties to the whole work in which their boards share, whether denominational or union.

With respect to administrative and ecclesiastical relations, the Committee recognizes the facts are far from simple. It has not, therefore, attempted at this time to suggest a working scheme for closer relations in America. It does recommend, however, that the problem be taken most seriously by the American churches and their agents, the foreign mission boards.

V. PRINCIPLES OF FURTHER UNITY

As already noted, the Committee's studies in the historical background of the movement toward unity indicate that it has taken a great variety of forms on the foreign mission field. At times they have seemed to be contradictory to one another, and many Christians still strongly hold that some particular form alone is final or at least much closer to the mind of Christ than any other.

In the longer stretches of time, however, all the kinds of unity studied obviously exhibit a strong general tendency to converge. We have recorded all impartially and have grown to look with sympathy upon all. It is, therefore, not our purpose now to indicate one or more preferred forms. The total issue of unity, as currently analyzed by the ecumenical movement, is extremely complicated and no solution based upon data from a single section of the Church is to be looked for.

The Unity Which We Seek

Certainly it is necessary to take this position with respect to the efforts to unify the American churches. The Seminar on Christian Unity and Coöperation held in connection with the Atlantic City Biennial Meeting of the Federal Council in 1940 received a statement on this subject in the following terms (*Source Book*, pp. 3–4):

There are differences of conviction as to the form of unity which is our ultimate goal. The Edinburgh Conference carefully analyzed the different meanings of unity, and recognized that they all expressed a common aspiration and tendency; but did not attempt definitions of goals.

We do not feel that sufficient consensus has been reached by the American churches to permit of any precise official expression or definition of the unity which we seek. We would, however, emphasize the fact that representatives of substantially all American churches were able to join in the Edinburgh Affirmation of Unity with its humble confession that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ and its positive declaration:

"We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not see clearly what outward form it should take."

Our policy, then, must be one of working toward an ultimate goal not clearly discerned as to form, but to the reality of which we nevertheless fully commit ourselves. We will walk together toward this goal

as far and as rapidly as the guidance of God carries us. Our policy must include the working out together of these aspirations and tendencies from step to step.

This statement echoes the Edinburgh findings (*Report*, *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*, Chap. VI (i and ii)); and the Committee feels that it constitutes a judicious statement of its own attitude with respect to unity in the fields which it is studying.

The South India Scheme

Nevertheless, there is one outstanding case of prospective union on the foreign field which we have been led to examine with peculiar care; namely, the South India Scheme. Our warrant is found in the recommendation of the 1930 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, that churches considering union "should take note of the way of meeting the difficulty which is adopted in the Proposed Scheme for Union in South India, and which appears to offer hope of success. We do not suggest that that Scheme as it stands could be adopted in any other circumstances than those which it was designed to meet; but we think the principles on which it rests may be found capable of application in other fields." (*The Lambeth Conference, 1930*, The Macmillan Company, p. 118.)

The Edinburgh World Conference on Faith and Order (*Report*, Chap. VI (v), 17) also pointed out the great importance of the South India Scheme because "union negotiations based on its principles are in progress in other parts of the world." The Madras Meeting of the International Missionary Council (*Findings and Recommendations*, Sec. XVI, p. 130) culled this passage from the Edinburgh Report and underlined it by approval of the further study of the Scheme. The Scheme has thus ceased to be a matter of consequence only to the churches immediately concerned, and has become an object of expectant interest on the part of the churches generally.

Origins and Development. The Scheme originated in an action of the Anglican and South India United Churches in 1919. Representatives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church were added in 1923. After six years of preliminary discussion, a crucial proposal designed to harmonize views and attitudes with respect to the ministry was made by the Anglicans in 1926 and embodied in a resolution of the joint committee in the following terms: "that in order to secure the full mutual recognition of the ministers of uniting churches, the existing ministers

of the three churches be accepted as ministers of the Word and Sacraments." Ministers ordained in the churches which have planted the missions now connected with the uniting churches may be received as ministers of the uniting church, subject to their assent to its faith and constitution for a period, ultimately fixed at thirty years, at the end of which the united churches will consider and decide the question of continuing such "exceptions to the general principle of an episcopally ordained ministry."

Following favorable consideration of these basic suggestions, a continuation committee was authorized to draw up a Scheme of Church Union elaborating the nature and character of the united church. This was published in 1929. Resolutions of general approval were passed by the governing bodies of all three churches during 1932 and 1933. The Scheme has since been subject to prolonged discussion by the subordinate divisions of the three churches. Revisions were issued in 1931 and 1935, and it remains under active consideration, apparently with less prospect of immediate adoption than was anticipated by its advocates at the time of its first proposal.

Significance of the Scheme. The first section of this report evidences the manifold circumstances under which the movement for union has gone forward and the variety of forms under which it has appeared. Among them all it is in the South India Scheme of Union that the movement has taken on broadest range, most original and daring form and most definite detail. The Scheme undertakes to combine widely divergent types of ecclesiastical theory and attitude. In general, what is proposed is an adjustment within one church of four historic religious types; the Congregational, the Episcopal, the Methodist and the Presbyterian, under a scheme of union which, as is clearly understood, would ultimately eventuate in an autonomous church with bishops.

This church would incorporate strong Presbyterian and Congregational elements in its plan of government but would have achieved regularity from the standpoint of the church's continuity as conceived by Anglicans, through the device of ultimately securing an episcopally ordained ministry throughout the entire church. The attempt to unify the church by way of a unified ministry has nowhere else been so concretely and circumstantially developed; and the South India case is commonly looked upon as a test of the feasibility of all efforts to proceed along this line.

Ecclesiastically speaking, the present negotiations for union are

between four dioceses of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (Anglican); the South India United Church, composed of eight territorial councils; and four districts of the Methodist Church. During the course of negotiations the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon has experienced an important change of status, becoming independent of the Church of England in 1930.

The united church would remain in full fellowship and communion with all its parent churches. The most recent revision of the scheme lays even greater stress on the "fundamental principle that the Church of South India shall maintain and extend full communion and fellowship with the churches from which it had been formed and had severally had such fellowship." It would hope to be allowed participation by delegates in the highest assemblies of all these communions.

In harmony with the strong trend of discussion throughout the whole period following the Lambeth proposals, and with the balance of interest observed in all recent proposals in which Anglicanism has an essential place, the cardinal points of Christianity other than the ministry are rather simply and briefly dealt with in the terms of union. In the South India Scheme, statements concerning the evangelical message, the Scriptures, the creeds and sacraments were easily agreed to; and little difficulty has been raised with respect to them during the subsequent discussion.

In harmony with the principle above indicated, latitude is cheerfully accorded with respect to matters other than the ministry. With respect to worship, for example, the proposed constitution provides "utmost freedom for congregations to retain the forms of worship to which they have become accustomed, whether a Prayer Book, a Directory of Worship or extemporary prayers, and no changes shall be introduced except by agreement of the pastor and the congregation. But the essential parts of services like Baptism, Holy Communion, Marriage, Ordination and Consecration will necessarily remain as far as possible uniform throughout the Church."

The Central Issue. In the matter of orders, however, the character and constitution of the united church are most painstakingly set forth. Subsequent discussion has consisted essentially of insistent reiterations by all parties of their particular points of view; and each has sought to strengthen its position by successive demands that they be made more and more explicit within the general framework of common agreement.

As to polity the Scheme declares itself in the following terms:

The Church of South India recognizes that episcopal, presbyterial and congregational elements must all have their place in its order of life, and that the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the congregation of the faithful should all in their several spheres have responsibility and exercise authority in the life and work of the church, in its governance and administration, in its evangelistic and pastoral work, in its discipline, and in its worship.

However, as above noted, the proposed united church is frankly to be episcopal in essential polity. Its organization is based upon the acceptance of the historic episcopate, but without insistence upon the acceptance of any particular theory of the episcopate.

The episcopate is adopted in a constitutional form. Functions of bishops are named and carefully defined in a written instrument. On the other hand, the bishop is left in central position as guardian of the faith. He may suspend the action of his diocesan council in matters directly pertaining to the faith, worship and ministry of the church, pending the decision of the general Synod of the whole church. While thus the final authority in the church is definitely lodged in a representative synod, the body of bishops, sitting separately, may, by a two-thirds majority vote, determine the form in which any proposition with respect to doctrine, worship or ministry shall come before the Synod; and a two-thirds majority in the Synod is then necessary to override their position.

The provisions are a concrete expression of an essentially Catholic type of thinking expressed in Chapter II, Article 9 of the Constitution which reads as follows:

The Church of South India accepts the principle that as the Church of a whole region, being in fellowship with other regional churches, is ideally the embodiment of the Church Universal in that region, and as similarly the church of a diocese as a living part of a regional church is the Church Universal expressing its one life in that diocese, so also in the purpose of God every local group of the faithful organized for Christian life and worship as a congregation or pastorate within the fellowship of the diocese, represents in that place the same one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

This formula locates primary authority in the church as a whole as presumably a more adequate expression of the Church Universal than the parts are; and makes authority flow down to the parts rather than from the parts to the whole.

Recent Developments. Important modifications in the proposed Scheme were adopted by the Joint Committee of the churches negotiating for union at its 1939 session, in an effort to meet finally the issues raised by the South India United Church.

To the article reading:

> They also accept the Apostles' Creed and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as witnessing to and safeguarding that faith; and they thankfully acknowledge that same faith to be continuously confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the experience of the Church of Christ,

a note was added as follows:

> The uniting churches accept the fundamental truths embodied in the Creeds named above as providing a sufficient basis of union, but do not intend thereby to demand the assent of individuals to every word or phrase in them, or to assert that those Creeds are a complete expression of the Christian faith.

The statement concerning the priesthood of all believers was revised and strengthened.

The rule on representation agreed to a minimum of two presbyters and four lay delegates for each diocese, with a maximum of six presbyters and eight laymen based on the number of baptized members.

In response to the desire of the South India Church that sacramental intercommunion and intercelebration be practiced in advance of union, the Joint Committee recorded its opinion that full advantage has not been taken of permission for open communion already accorded by action of the Episcopal Synod and resolved "to encourage the fullest possible measure of intercommunion by the negotiating churches within the terms of that resolution." A special committee of nine was appointed to study questions involved in the practice of lay-celebration of communion, with instructions to report to the Joint Committee as soon as possible, "so that if God will, a final decision on union may be reached in the very near future."

The special committee's findings, released in September, 1940, have not been acted upon at the date of this writing. Lay-celebration, in most areas where it is practiced, is said to be "of recent origin and restricted in scope." Attempting to "draw out more fully the true doctrine of the priesthood" the draft report declares that all Christians share in the priestly function; that the true celebrant of every communion is Christ himself; that the local act of celebration should

be performed only by one commissioned for this purpose by the church; that this does not limit the grace of God to any particular channel but merely signifies that the constituted ministers of the church are the normal means of the operation of the Spirit. The report concludes by reaffirming the former action of the Joint Committee that, as the rule of church order, only bishops and presbyters should have authority to celebrate Holy Communion; but it adds that exceptions will be expected to continue until after final union, when the united church will make an ultimate decision as to the administration of the sacraments. (Text received from J. J. Banninga, March, 1941.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In its course of evolution the South India Scheme would seem to have reached something like the final possible form compatible with its essential principles. It is frankly an effort to combine within one organization and practice, strikingly different conceptions of the Church and the Ministry. Into the specific argument on this subject this report cannot profitably go.

With reference to the proposals for church union in South India, it is recognized that the American churches directly concerned have already expressed their approval and have given assurances of continued interest and support. The final decisions now rest with the autonomous churches in South India. However, in view of the great importance of their proposals and the possibly far-reaching effect their adoption may have in encouraging similar movements in other lands, *it is recommended* that the Foreign Missions Conference and the Federal Council consider the adoption of suitable resolutions that may serve to encourage and strengthen the churches in South India to consummate their proposed union at an early date.

VI. IMMEDIATE FORWARD STEPS

Especially in the Local Realization of Ecumenicity

THE South India negotiations began in 1919. It is now 1941. The numerous gains in unity which appear in the longer perspective of centuries have been made by people, under God, who most of the time confronted "insurmountable" obstacles. The results of their larger processes were often so delayed as to be almost lost in the mist of the future, and their specific proposals were more often deferred than accepted, when not finally defeated. It will not be otherwise with many of the freshly quickened aspirations of the younger churches, nor with personal hopes cherished by members of this Committee.

Such a prospect of delay naturally forces one to the consideration of immediate possibilities. What doors are already open? What progress is possible without tarrying for any?

Next Steps. Many who have previously confronted situations which at least temporarily blocked their larger plans, have already turned to the exploration of immediate possibilities. For example, the Churches of England and Scotland, whose negotiations for union bogged down in the early thirties, set forth coöperative measures that could be jointly undertaken pending the renewal of more basic discussions. Similarly, the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (in the "Syllabus on Approaches to Unity," pages 3, 7–8) have detailed a considerable list of immediate measures tending to bring the churches inwardly together in spite of delay in formal unification. The Joint Committee in charge of the South India plan in 1937 proposed as immediate measures (1) retreats for ministers; (2) conventions for workers; (3) joint evangelistic campaigns; (4) conferences for taking joint counsel regarding the growth and upbuilding of the church; (5) joint refresher courses, summer schools, etc.; (6) "within the areas of the proposed new dioceses leaders of the churches should consult regarding the practical steps"; (7) "speakers might be interchanged and delegates invited to attend meetings."

The most inclusive summary of "Next Steps Toward Unity" is found in the *Report* of the Edinburgh World Conference on Faith and Order (Chap. VI (v)), which elaborated their seventeen points. When, therefore, attempts to move forward are blocked and official

negotiations fail or fade out, the ecumenical process has by no means halted. It has merely turned to things immediately possible.

But such measures of immediate progress as can be taken in spite of obstacles are likely to appear as mere detours. They follow secondary roads because the primary ways of advance are blocked. Quite possibly, however, they are major ways in a profounder sense. Time spent in laying foundations is not time wasted. What may be done without tarrying for any still may be crucial, especially as concerns the strengthening and confirming of the inner unity of the churches.

Significance of Localized Ecumenicity. It is further to be considered that the final test of ecumenicity lies at the bottom of the Christian structure in local relationships. Ecumenicity has to be realized among Christians as neighbors and in Christian congregations and organizations as parts of communities. This will be true even when unity in overhead structure is achieved. It is as neighbors that Christians finally will remain separate or become united.

Both with respect to coöperation and formal union, our greatest failures are at the bottom. The large measure of success registered in our studies in both these phases of unity frequently has failed to permeate the church at its lowest levels. Madras speaks in general terms of "going beyond" coöperation; but one cannot go beyond a coöperation which is never started. The immediate possibility universally open to churches which cannot unite is to *begin* to coöperate, or to carry coöperation further.

All told, then, the ways of realizing unity which are possible at the bottom have profound significance even when unity is delayed at the top. The Committee, therefore, with the utmost seriousness, commends its suggestions at this point to the churches.

Responsibility for Next Steps. Our preliminary historical reports describe at length the forms of organized coöperation which have developed, particularly on the foreign mission field. This description need not be repeated. Councils of Churches, local, state and national, exist as in the United States; or National Christian Councils (often with provincial subdivisions) flourish, as in very many of the countries of the younger churches. The immediate forward steps would naturally fall under their auspices in the areas of their particular jurisdiction, and will be assimilated with their existing programs.

But whether such coöperative agencies exist or not, an immediate ecumenical advance concerns all sorts and conditions of Christians. Its appeal is inclusive of ministers, laymen, laywomen and youth.

All share responsibility and all should participate. The next step most open to all is the re-interpretation of all the other Christian concerns in the light of the ecumenical ideal. It is a striking fact that numerous local coöperative agencies in the United States are now seeking ecumenical sanction for their localized efforts. A remarkable process of re-interpretation has been going on on the part of state and local Councils of Churches and similar organizations, as well as of local women's interdenominational groups, in the light of the ecumenical movement. Many are now seeing their own organizations in new proportions and new splendor as a manifestation in little of what ecumenicity means in large. This "next step" is possible on all levels from world-wide churches to individual Christian hearts.

Turning now to specific ways already open for strengthening the unity of the churches in local communities, the reports already cited in earlier paragraphs of this section offer an almost embarrassing richness of suggestions. It is not necessary, therefore, to draw up new lists. It would, of course, have been possible to sift the combined lists and to attempt to translate particular suggestions into the terms of the peculiar circumstances of the younger churches. It has been thought better, however, to confront all churches with the experience of the whole Church, from which they may choose and make adaptations according to their peculiar circumstances.

Consequently, the present report offers merely a skeleton outline of specific suggestions drawn from the sources indicated above, greatly condensed and re-classified, and supplemented by suggestions growing out of the experience of the American churches or of the younger churches themselves.

Specific Suggestions for Immediate Forward Steps

I. Let all churches stress the reality of their inner unity as expressed by *the common usages of the Christian community;* such as
   1. The anniversaries of the Christian Year, widely observed by separate congregations.
   2. Use of materials of common worship (hymns, prayers and liturgies, symbols) recognized as the common possession of the Church, yet drawing upon sources in its many branches and divisions.
   3. The annual observance of a Season of Prayer for Christian Unity, as recommended by the World Council of Churches.

II. Let the churches consciously *use current local contacts between Christians* as affirmations of the essential oneness of their churches; for example —

A. *Contacts between Congregations.*

1. In union services stressing worship; e.g., Thanksgiving (in the United States); other national celebrations; religious seasons (Holy Week, etc.).
2. In the use of ecumenical liturgies definitely confessing the unity of the church.
3. In union services stressing evangelism as witnessing to the essential unity of the church's message.
4. In united campaigns of house-to-house evangelism, carrying the message of the gospel in the name of the whole Church.

B. *Contacts between Ministers.*

1. Exchange of pulpits — systematic as well as occasional.
2. Organized ministers' associations as expressions of a common ministry as well as of the common interests of a professional group.
3. Corporate ritual acts, such as a common processional and participation by the ministers of a community as a body in ecumenical worship.

C. *Contacts between Women's and Youths' Organizations.*

By such means as:

1. The annual observance of the interdenominational World Day of Prayer, especially for missions (first Friday in Lent), sponsored by several national women's organizations.
2. By interpreting interdenominational "women's work" not as something apart, but as "participation in the organized society of Christians, the church."
3. By encouraging their young people to participate in interdenominational fellowships of youth, such as the United Christian Youth Movement, with its local inter-church programs and smaller conferences.

III. Let the churches make formal *acknowledgment of their essential unity* in connection with *the induction, transfer and education* of members, by —

1. Publicly receiving members into the whole Church of Christ, not merely into a denominational or local division.

2. Transferring members within the Church of Christ; not merely from one congregation or denomination to another.
3. Conducting interchurch visitations so that all Christians may have first-hand knowledge of the common values for edification and culture of other churches than their own.

IV. Let the churches *facilitate intercommunion* at least within the limits set forth by the *Report* of the Edinburgh World Conference on Faith and Order. (VI-ii (b) and -v (12)), by —

1. Practicing open communion when it is permitted, either habitually or under exceptional circumstances.
2. Experiencing spiritual intercommunion where external intercommunion is not permitted.
3. Appreciating different viewpoints conscientiously held, so as to prevent resentment over inability of fellow Christians fully to share one another's sacraments.

V. Let the churches advance unity through the *education and participation* of local churches *in the larger ecumenical movement.*

1. By sharing in ecumenical studies; by special discussion groups or classes; women and youth groups, etc.
2. By making a definite place in the local church's system of religious education for instruction in unity.
3. By serious consideration of any proposals for unity which may be referred for local study by the respective denominations. (Very often plans for union have to receive local assent.)
4. By intelligent local study of the more important schemes for general church union. (See the South India Scheme, Section V, above.)
5. By knowledge and support of the World Council of Churches.

VI. Let the churches *enlarge the circle of denominations practicing local coöperative unity.*

1. By including so far as possible all churches associated in the ecumenical movement.
2. By special cultivation in the local practice of coöperation, of churches separated by race, language or theology.

VII. Let the churches *infuse universal quality into the more intimate Christian fellowships:*

1. Realizing genuine unity and fellowship within every local congregation.

2. Constituting small "cells" for intimate fellowship in study, support and prayer in behalf of unity.
3. Teaching every Christian to aspire to have "the ecumenical mind in me." Paraphrasing Principal Richard Davidson, let him say to himself,

> At baptism I was admitted to no local or sectional order. The intention was to make me a member of the Church of Christ. As a member of the Church Catholic, a representative of Christianity in all lands and ages, I am bound in loyalty to that Great Church, far more than to the particular denomination or local church to which I belong. I am an organ of Christian unity; a steward of the whole Church's spiritual heritage, of the whole Church's vision of truth and duty, of the whole Church's ranges of devotion, of the whole Church's resources in organization for fellowship and the cure of souls, of the whole Church's enduement as a channel for the *grace* of God. I should like, if it be not presumptuous, to appropriate St. Augustine's words: "I take a whole Christ for my Saviour; I take the whole Bible for my staff; I take the whole Church for my fellowship."

Inner Unity and the Outward Order of Church Relationships

The constant effort to practice ecumenicity locally through these and similar means adapted to each national and church situation, would have the greatest tonic effect on the ecumenical movement in its national and world-wide embodiments. And without such widespread practice in communities, congregations and individual lives, ecumenicity in its more extensive aspects cannot be more than an empty shell.

In the above suggestions, possible changes in the structure of the Church have not been considered. It should be obvious, however, that if inner unity actually becomes stronger, the time will come when it will require changes in the outer order of church relationships in order to match the inner fact. Let churches of communities, nations, and the world, be looking for such a time and be ready to unite fully when it comes.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Reply to the Madras Resolution.* In view of the "Normative Resolution" adopted by the Atlantic City meetings of the Foreign Missions Conference and the Federal Council of Churches, *it is recommended:* That both the Foreign Missions Conference and the Federal Council of Churches be requested to adopt appropriate action to transmit the "Normative Resolution" (p. 9) to all their constituent mission boards and churches with a view to the presentation of this resolution to the authoritative church courts for their adoption.
2. *Administrative Policy.* Because of differing administrative policy in the various churches, and because of the difficulty of generalizing about the initiation of action whether this should be by the churches and missionary boards in the West, or by the churches and missions in other lands, the recommendations on pages 16–17 and 20–21 are combined as follows, and approved:
   (1) That administrative responsibility should be more rapidly transferred to the younger churches;
   (2) That serious consideration should be given to the unification, within compassable areas, of the administration of missionary aid given to united churches;
   (3) That further efforts should be directed to the unification of the administration of all missionary work in certain geographical areas, provinces, parts of provinces or even cities, with the expectation that such practical experiences in easily compassable areas may lead to united administration on a larger scale in due time;
   (4) That consideration be given to further experimental expansion of united administration in America, so that in the main a unified agency in the West may deal directly with the united churches and with the united administrative organization in other lands;
   (5) That the foreign missionary movement should evidence pioneering adventuresomeness and leadership in ecumenicity at the home base as it has through a long history on the foreign field;
   (6) That the younger churches should be called upon to show courage in assuming administrative responsibility corresponding to their independent ecclesiastical status.

3. *South India Union.* With reference to the proposals for church union in South India, it is recognized that the American churches directly concerned have already expressed their approval and have given assurances of continued interest and support. The final decisions now rest with the autonomous churches in South India. However, in view of the great importance of their proposals and the possibly far-reaching effect their adoption may have in encouraging similar movements in other lands, *it is recommended* (p. 28): That the Foreign Missions Conference and the Federal Council consider the adoption of suitable resolutions that may serve to encourage and strengthen the churches in South India to consummate their proposed union at an early date.

APPENDIX

Fields Offering Possibilities of Early Advance in Union

1. *Philippine Islands*

The territorial division of responsibility among major denominations which has been maintained from the beginning of American occupancy of these islands has been subject to recent strain on account of a large-scale migration of population; but happy means for the adjudication of differences have been provided by the comity machinery of the Federation of Evangelical Churches.

No enlargement of denominational membership has come to the ranks of the United Church (Congregational, Presbyterian and United Brethren), but interest in organic union on the part of other denominations continues. (See Douglass: *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity*, 1927–1936, p. 102 f.)

The National Christian Council founded in 1929 as the successor of the Evangelical Union, has evolved into a very aggressive Federation of Evangelical Churches, including all major bodies except the Protestant Episcopal and Adventist. It has recently adopted novel proposals calling for the sending of missionaries for specialized tasks on a union basis and for providing funds interdenominationally for special non-recurring projects. Under this policy the coöperating boards at the home base would deliberately send out joint representatives for united work instead of merely allowing their representatives to participate in united work as it develops on the mission field. (Minutes of the Philippine Conference, Washington, D. C., April 9–14, 1940.)

2. *Church Union and Government Pressure in Japan*

Following the approval in principle of a basis of church union for the major denominations by the All-Japan Christian Conference of 1935 (see Douglass: *op. cit.*, pp. 23–26), which was reaffirmed in 1938, a joint commission on union, constituted by official action of a major group of denominations, gradually got under way. (*Japan National Christian Council Bulletin*, November, 1939.) The issue, however, suddenly became exigent in connection with the tightening of government control over all cultural agencies, especially those with foreign affiliations. International Rotary groups, for example, were compelled to disband.

The new instrument of government control was the Religious Organizations Law, effective April 1, 1940. For the first time it recognized Christianity as one of the religions of the Empire and proposed to give recognized status to denominations whose constitutions had been approved.

The Religions Bureau administering the new measures was, however, unwilling to deal with the great variety of existing Christian groups, and had been pressing for a union of small ones. The proposed minimum of fifty churches and 5,000 members would have permitted full recognition only for the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, Baptist and two branches of the Holiness Churches. No denomination had as yet had its application for recognition formally approved and many changes in their constitutions or by-laws were being requested. The entire Christian group, including branches not members of the National Christian Council, were being driven to closer coöperation in view of this new pressure against their common movement.

In late August and September, 1940, the situation suddenly became acute as a result of proposed additional regulatory legislation and the concurrence of apparently a very large part of the constituency of the Japanese Christian Church in the resurgence of nationalistic feeling. A new and more drastic Religions Bill is in preparation which will require all religions "to fit into the framework of Japan's new national structure." It is reported to require the elimination of foreign administrators from all churches. This provision was first enforced against the Salvation Army, which was compelled to submit to reorganization. This was followed by the enforced resignation of foreign bishops of the Japanese Anglican Church — three British and three American — and the reported prohibition of foreign support to Japanese churches.

Under the pressure of these feelings and circumstances, representatives of forty denominations convened on August 27 to consider proposals for a united Japanese church. The session split on the issue of immediately disbanding all denominations in order to enter into this church. However, on October 17, 1940, the churches of Baptist, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Brethren origins declared their purpose to unite and appointed a commission to draft a plan of union. The Anglican Japanese Church is still attempting to maintain independent existence and the Japanese Government has apparently accorded separate status to the

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches within the Christian Group. (See *Japan National Christian Council Bulletin*, January, 1941.)

Union enforced against the consciences of bodies of Christians would obviously lack all genuine ecumenical quality. If, however, the unification of the Protestant churches is finally permitted along lines on which they had themselves been long moving it may be considered, in part, genuine evolution and not mere compulsion.

3. *China*

During the recent troublous years the momentum of the past has carried coöperative and union tendencies forward though naturally with impeded progress. Greater stress on regional coöperation has developed, especially in Northern and Western China.

The union of three great American branches of Methodism has resulted in a strong combination of eight Methodist Episcopal, one Methodist Episcopal South, and one Methodist Protestant annual conferences into the East Asia Central Conference. Recent resolutions of the English Methodist Church in China — recently united as the result of unions in England — congratulate American Chinese Methodism and advise the immediate adoption of a common name for the two bodies in order to indicate to the world their intimate relationship and their hope for "the ultimate wider Church of which Chinese Christians dream." (Report of the Assembly of the "Chung Hua Hsung Tao King Hui," *Chinese Recorder*, May, 1940, p. 286.)

Conversations with respect to union along South India lines initiated under Anglican auspices have apparently been discontinued.

Meanwhile the transfer of the government and the migration of vast Chinese populations from the occupied regions to the Western provinces have been accompanied by the transfer of numerous Christian institutions and constituencies. The Chinese National Christian Council has held numerous discussions relative to the necessity of coöperative action in West China "in view of the danger that each denomination will follow its own migrant members without reference to what others are doing." (*International Review of Missions*, April, 1940; *China Rediscovers Her West*, edited by Yi-fang Wu and Frank W. Price, Missionary Education Movement, 1940.) Habitual forms of coöperation in education, literature, student work and other evangelism, and in refugee work are being undertaken. Numerous union projects moving into the Western provinces are

being happily accommodated as guests. Comity arrangements are being readjusted. Certain denominations are welcoming assistance in territory previously assigned to them. The slogan "A United Church of the West" is being bravely announced. But reports of official visitors from the National Christian Council (see report of R. Rees, July, 1940) indicate that no comprehensive plan of united work is actually under way.